

Department Hailed as Leader in 'Green' Movement

By Lisa Daniel
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2010 – In a prelude to this week's Earth Day events, a major independent research group today called the Defense Department a leader in energy conservation.

"The department is doing more than sounding an alarm; it has enacted energy goals and is inventing, testing and deploying new technologies and alternative fuels to meet those goals," Phyllis Cuttino, director of Pew Charitable Trusts' climate and energy programs, said during a conference call to announce the program's new report on military use and conservation of energy.

"The military is, in many respects, leading the way and helping to re-energize America's future," she said.

The department is a prime consumer, Cuttino noted, accounting for 80 percent of the U.S. government's energy consumption, amounting to 330,000 barrels of oil and 3.8 billion kilowatts of electricity per day for more than 500 major military installations. But, she said, it is on its way to meeting its stated goal of having 25 percent of its energy come from renewable sources by 2025.

The report, "Reenergizing America's Defense: How the Armed Forces Are Stepping Forward to Combat Climate Change and Improve U.S. Energy Posture," outlines how the department and military services are moving toward that goal. As with the creation of the Internet and global positioning technology, the department is leading the effort in discovering ways to not only use less fuel, but also to use alternative fuels to reduce greenhouse gasses and be less reliant on foreign oil, the report says.

Amanda J. Dory, deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy; Navy Secretary Ray Mabus; and John W. Warner, a former Navy secretary and U.S. senator from Virginia, took part in the report and the conference call. They described the department's efforts at energy conservation and innovation as important to both national security and the environment.

"The Department of Defense takes climate change seriously," Dory said, adding that department officials have "embraced" conservation in policies and law, including acquisitions.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates identified energy as one of the department's top 25 transformational priorities, and the Quadrennial Defense Review, released Feb. 1, is the first strategic document to give "thorough treatment" to energy issues, Dory said.

Department officials recognize the link between climate change and global requests for U.S. military assistance, Dory said. In 2008 and 2009, the military had 120 requests to assist with natural disasters such as hurricanes and wild fires in the United States, as well as 54 requests to respond to overseas natural disasters last year, she said.

Mabus said the Navy historically has been a leader in energy changes – from sails to coal,

from coal to fuel, and from fuel to nuclear energy.

“Every single time,” he said, “it made our Navy and our Marine Corps more efficient and better fighters, and we’re absolutely confident that it will be the case again this time.”

By 2020, Navy officials plan to have half of the service’s fuel use, both ashore and afloat, come from non-fossil sources, Mabus said. Officials expect to cut fuel consumption for the Navy’s 50,000 noncombat vehicles with alternative methods within five years, he said.

The decreasing reliance on fossil fuels “will make us better warfighters,” Mabus said, both strategically by reducing dependence on oil from volatile nations, and tactically by freeing up warfighters from delivering as much fuel and reducing the high-risk of attacks on convoys that carry it.

Cuttino noted that 70 percent of tonnage shipped to the Iraqi war effort is fuel and water.

In Afghanistan, Mabus said, troops are using solar-powered water purification systems to reduce the use of fossil fuels and the need to haul water. Marines there are using things such as spray-on insulation to keep tents warm in winter and cool in summer, and Marines at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia are testing alternative fuels and other products to reduce the need to ship fuel to Afghanistan, he said.

Mabus gave other examples of how the Navy is going “green”:

-- The Navy is developing a “green” carrier strike group to run completely on alternative fuels by 2016, and this week plans to do a flight demonstration of the “Green Hornet,” an F-18 Super Hornet powered by a 50/50 biofuel blend.

-- The Navy last year commissioned the USS Makin Island, a large-deck amphibious ship propelled by both gas and electric engines, expected to save the service \$25 million over the ship’s lifetime.

-- Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Calif. – the service’s largest land holding – is being powered solely by geothermal sources and has produced enough geothermal energy to provide for the surrounding community.

The Air Force also is testing biofuels on its A-10 Thunderbolt II and expects to have the Air Force Academy off the public electrical grid by 2012, Dory said. And Army officials in North Carolina, Washington state and Hawaii are working on transportation patterns to reduce single-occupancy vehicles, she said.

“Everywhere you go, you see that the American GI is figuring out how to save energy,” Warner said. “Every base in the country has a plan to save energy. This whole Defense Department is mobilized and thinking green and I salute their efforts.”

Warner said he saw how shortages of food and water from climate change led to instability in places such as Somalia and Liberia, leading to U.S. military intervention.

“Energy dependence and climate change are clearly emerging as added challenges complicating and expanding potential missions for our military,” he wrote in the report.

“Yet, once again, our armed forces are preparing to lead in addressing existing and emerging national security challenges.”

Biographies:

[Amanda J. Dory](#)

[Ray Mabus](#)

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